



EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

The Episcopal Church Center ▪ 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017
(212) 922-5384 ▪ (800) 334-7626 ▪ FAX (212) 557-5827 ▪ Quest Inboxes: ENS/JAMES SOLHEIM/JAMES THRALL

Office of News and Information

JAMES E. SOLHEIM, DIRECTOR

JAMES H. THRALL, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

October 19, 1995

For immediate release:

CONTENTS

PAGE

- **NEWS DIGEST** 1
- **Bishops declare women should be ordained in all dioceses, decry mean-spiritedness (95-1265)** 7
- **Interim bodies make new connections at joint meeting in Minneapolis (95-1266)** 11
- **Presentment supporters and opponents speak out as Righter heresy trial approaches (95-1267)** 13
- **Diocese of Alaska struggles with cultural differences and loss of its first Native bishop (95-1268)** 15
- **Woman elected diocesan bishop in Rhode Island (95-1269)** 17
- **Conciliatory tone marks Episcopal Women's Caucus in Forth Worth (95-1270)** 19
- **World Council of Churches Central Committee struggles with issues of unity (95-1271)** 20
- **World Mission group floats bold proposal for church reorganization (95-1272)** 23
- NEWSBRIEFS (95-1273)** 26

PROCESSED

OCT 25 1995

GTU LIBRARY

NEWSFEATURES

National AIDS conference forges new partnership of governments and churches (95-1274) 31

Episcopal Church continues leadership in HIV/AIDS ministries (95-1275) 34

Archbishop Carey visits Sudan and Egypt (95-1276) 35

Presiding Bishops remarks to the House of Bishops interim meeting, September 23, 1995, Portland, Oregon (95-1277) 38

A statement from the House of Bishops, September 28, 1995, Portland, Oregon (95-1278) 41

A statement of concern (95-1279) 42

A statement made by certain bishops in the face of the impending trial of Bishop Righter (95-1280) 43

REVIEWS AND RESOURCES (95-1281) 45



news digest

95-1265D

Bishops declare women should be ordained in all dioceses, decry mean-spiritedness

(ENS) At their fall interim meeting September 22-28 in Portland, Oregon, the bishops of the Episcopal Church sent strong signals that "mean-spiritedness" should not be tolerated in the church and that time is running out for bishops who refuse to ordain women or permit them to operate as priests in their dioceses.

Picking up on Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning's opening statement that chided "pressure groups around the church who are doing all they can to create a climate of dis-ease," the bishops condemned the use of "fragmentary and distorted information" to "demean persons and create environments of fear, hostility and distrust." At the same time they welcomed "legitimate criticism and differences of opinion" that are "vital for the shaping of our future."

Following a morning-long debate, the bishops voted 122 to 17, with 18 abstentions, that equal access to ordination for men and women is "mandatory" throughout the church. The "mind of the house" statement endorsed the recommendation of the committee appointed at last summer's General Convention in Indianapolis to "promote dialogue and understanding and to discuss how the canon can be implemented in every diocese of this church."

"Our proposal is designed to protect people's conscience," said Bishop Frank Allen of Atlanta. "We can respect one another in our theological differences--but the notion of conscience has all too often been used to circumvent what we believe, and has been used as a cloak to enable individuals to do whatever they think is right in their own eyes." He said that "conscience must be respected but conscience should not be used to erect a barrier to the legitimate calling of women to ordained ministry in any diocese of this church."

While the 1976 General Convention of the Episcopal Church voted that canons on ordination should apply equally to men and women, the bishops of four out of the 118 dioceses and jurisdictions currently do not ordain women or recognize their ministry in the church.

The 1997 General Convention still must adopt the actual language suggested by the committee that would clarify the mandatory nature of the ordination policy, but the bishops' statement was seen as a clear indication that those changes are likely to be approved.

Bishop William Wantland of Eau Claire, one of the bishops who refuse to ordain women, maintained that the vote "says quite clearly that those who follow the traditional Catholic understanding of holy orders are not to be included in this church." He announced his intention to resign following the 1997 General Convention, should the canonical changes

be approved, adding that "it's a fairly safe bet that it will pass in a fairly short order." He told a local reporter that he expects to be "a thorn in the flesh of this Protestant sect." One of several members of the committee who joined in producing a minority report, he argued that the 1976 ordination canon is "permissive" rather than mandatory.

95-1266D

Interim bodies make new connections at joint meeting in Minneapolis

(ENS) For the first time in history, all of the "interim bodies"--committees and commissions that serve between General Conventions--met together with several other national committees "to identify ways the Episcopal Church might function more creatively and effectively," in the words of conference consultant Sally Bucklee.

After four days of working separately as individual committees and jointly with other groups, most of the nearly 250 participants left highly pleased with the connections they had made. While a few complained that the schedule included too many interruptions of their own work, many said they had developed a deeper appreciation for their own responsibilities and the wider mission of the church.

"There was a collective feeling of surprise when in the midst of meeting with another committee we began to think of our work in a whole different way," said the Rev. Jane Garrett of Leeds, Massachusetts, chair of the Committee on Continuing the Dialogue on Human Sexuality.

The Minneapolis gathering also offered the church's Standing Commission on the Structure of the Church an opportunity to begin fulfilling its mandate from the 1994 convention to review the church's current organization, including the committee arrangement, and to make recommendations for streamlining. As part of the schedule, each of the groups had an hour-long meeting with commission representatives intended to give individual committees opportunities to express "who is the church and where is the church and what is the church," said Bucklee.

95-1267D

Presentment supporters and opponents speak out as Righter heresy trial approaches

(ENS) As the Episcopal Church moves toward its second heresy trial in history involving a bishop, opinion remains sharply divided--and frequently expressed--over whether the accused is a heretic or a hero.

Ten bishops who brought a presentment against Bishop Walter Righter for ordaining a noncelibate homosexual man in 1990 while serving as assistant bishop in the Diocese of Newark have charged that his action violates church doctrine. Others who have rallied to Righter's cause maintain he is a scapegoat unfairly targeted for doing what many other bishops have done.

The charge against Righter will be heard by the nine-member Court for the Trial of a Bishop in Chicago January 3-5.

According to Bishop Edward Jones of Indianapolis, president of the court, the site was chosen because Chicago is accessible for travel; the trial will be held at the offices of the Diocese of Chicago whose cathedral next door will be used for prayer to undergird the deliberations; and the site is "neutral."

95-1268D

Diocese of Alaska struggles with cultural differences and loss of its first Native bishop

(ENS) As the clouds moved lower into the valleys and the cold rains of impending winter persisted, Alaska's Episcopalians gathered in Sitka October 5-8 for the diocesan convention--and what turned out to be a bittersweet celebration of a centennial.

A hundred years after the Diocese of Alaska was formed with the election of a first bishop, delegates to the annual convention were faced with the task of planning for the election of a new bishop following the recent resignation of the Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston for what he cited as "family reasons." Still struggling with some feelings of denial and anger, the 90 representatives of the sprawling diocese almost 10 times the size of New England listened as their dynamic young bishop shared his deepest hopes for their future--a future without his leadership.

"We stand at a crossroads, a threshold," the bishop said in his opening comments, "a very powerful and emotional time." He talked very frankly about "a lonely and terrible feeling" he felt as he searched for God's presence in his life in the midst of personal and professional doubts.

"It's so painful because the vision was so clear, the hope so real, because it was so right," Charleston said in describing his five years as the diocese's first Native American bishop. "We felt a new energy and vitality in what we were doing together. We were on the right track. We were going to become a new diocese, a new community--a tolerant, loving, caring community."

Working through some obvious tensions between the Native parishes of the interior and the Arctic, and the heavily white parishes of Anchorage and the south, the convention decided to hire a consultant and delay their election of a new bishop until the spring of 1997.

During a final Eucharist, including confirmations of 20, convention participants seemed to demonstrate that they were ready to meet the challenge of the future. In what one delegate described as a "transcendent and humbling experience," the service focused all the hopes and dreams that had been flowing through the convention.

"They left renewed and refreshed," Charleston said later in an interview. "We all felt such a strong, powerful, spiritual feeling," he said, convinced that "we are on the way to becoming a diocese that is able to honor our differences and serve as God's messengers in Alaska."

1269D

Woman elected diocesan bishop in Rhode Island

(ENS) The Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island elected the Very Rev. GERALYN WOLF, dean of Christ Church Cathedral in Louisville, Kentucky, as the 12th bishop of Rhode Island, September 30. Pending confirmation of her election by a majority of diocesan bishops and standing committees, Wolf will become the fifth female bishop of the Episcopal Church and the second female bishop to head a diocese.

In an initial field of candidates that included four women and five men before one man dropped out, "I didn't feel that gender was an issue at all," Wolf said. "You couldn't coalesce around a woman just because you wanted a woman. You had to get into their personality and skills."

Perhaps, she said, "we're moving on to a routine that simply says men and women can be elected bishop."

Her election in 1988 as the first female cathedral dean actually brought more publicity, and was just as surprising to her, she said. One of the earliest women ordained a priest, "I was hoping some day I would have partial oversight of a parish," she told the *Courier-Journal* newspaper of Louisville. "And I never even dreamed of being a bishop or a dean."

Wolf graduated from Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge and was ordained in Philadelphia in 1978. Prior to serving as dean in Louisville, Wolf served parishes in the Diocese of Pennsylvania.

95-1270D

Conciliatory tone marks Episcopal Women's Caucus in Fort Worth

(ENS) Buoyed by a strong affirmation of women's ordination by the House of Bishops (*see separate article*), the Episcopal Women's Caucus took a conciliatory tone as it carried its call for equality into a bastion of opposition, the Diocese of Fort Worth.

"We are here in Fort Worth for solidarity," the Rev. Cynthia L. Black, caucus president, told the more than 100 women and some men who attended the annual meeting under the theme "Power Tools for Women," September 29-October 1. Women in other dioceses who enjoy the privilege of ordination should always remember those barred by the policies of their bishops in Fort Worth and three other dioceses, she said.

The tide appears to be turning, conference speakers noted, especially as the bishops meeting in Portland shortly before the caucus conference affirmed that the canon approving women's ordination should be mandatory in all dioceses. Still, the speakers said, both vigilance and compassion are needed as the issue moves to a final vote at the 1997 General Convention.

In a resolution welcoming the bishops' mind-of-the-house statement, the caucus maintained that "no one was victorious and no one was defeated by this action," and pledged to extend "its hand in love and friendship to all in our church." The resolution also offers to

"assist in any way" in implementing the canon on ordination and calls on Executive Council to continue the committee whose work led to the bishops' vote.

95-1271D

World Council of Churches Central Committee struggles with issues of unity

(ENS) Struggling with severe financial challenges and questions about the role the World Council of Churches should play in the future of ecumenism, the WCC's Central Committee meeting in Geneva in September nevertheless issued strong and unified statements on issues ranging from Bosnia to nuclear testing.

The Central Committee supervises the work of the council and its staff between assemblies, which are held every seven years.

In an unusual sign of solidarity, the committee marched *en masse* to the nearby United Nations office building to protest nuclear arms testing by China and particularly by France, which conducted much-criticized tests in the Morurua Atoll in the Pacific Ocean.

The committee also adopted a statement condemning exclusivist claims on Jerusalem that echoed statements endorsed by Presiding bishop Edmond Browning. Describing Jerusalem as a place of "deep religious, historical and emotional attachments" for Christians, Jews and Muslims, the committee called for freedom of access to holy places for all three faiths, among other rights, and repeated its opposition to Israel's unilateral annexation of East Jerusalem.

In a three-page message, the committee also appealed to religious, political and military leaders in the former Yugoslavia to end the war there and begin "to heal the deep wounds of history."

95-1272D

World Mission group floats bold proposal for church reorganization

(ENS) The Standing Commission on World Mission is spreading a story dangerous to the status quo.

Meeting with other national committees in Minneapolis last month, members told of a new vision for the Episcopal Church that calls into question top-down decision-making and executive power. It is the story of the Episcopal Council for Global Mission (ECGM) and it is attracting adherents for a reorganized church.

The story of ECGM elicits such curiosity because it illustrates how people who disagree violently on politics and theology can hold opposing views and still work together. Established in 1990, the council today has more than 30 organizational members: missionary societies, voluntary agencies, dioceses, individual congregations, seminaries and corporate parishes like Trinity Wall Street. Theologically, they are as diverse a lot as can be found in the church.

In a "Vision" statement distributed at the Minneapolis meeting, commission members described their idea of a series of coalitions like ECGM, not just for world mission and the sending of missionaries, but for all those groups and organizations involved in mission in whatever capacity--evangelism, Christian education, advocacy.

Admitting that the proposal could be seen as "fairly revolutionary," the Rev. Ian Douglas, commission chair and a founding member of ECGM, said, "We are recognizing that the [Episcopal Church Center] as provider of program, services, goods, has been declining since the 1960s. We're saying ... how do we move to another model ... a model of networking, a network of networks."

95-1265

Bishops declare women should be ordained in all dioceses, decry mean-spiritedness

by James H. Thrall and James Solheim

(ENS) Bishops of the Episcopal Church meeting for their fall interim meeting September 22-28 in Portland, Oregon, sent strong signals that "mean-spiritedness" should not be tolerated in the church and that time is running out for bishops who refuse to ordain women or permit them to operate as priests in their dioceses.

Picking up on Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning's opening statement (*Text in Newsfeatures*) that chided "pressure groups around the church who are doing all they can to create a climate of dis-ease," the bishops condemned the use of "fragmentary and distorted information" to "demean persons and create environments of fear, hostility and distrust." At the same time they welcomed "legitimate criticism and differences of opinion" that are "vital for the shaping of our future." (*Text in Newsfeatures*)

Following a morning-long debate, the bishops voted 122 to 17, with 18 abstentions, that equal access to ordination for men and women is "mandatory" throughout the church. The "mind of the house" statement endorsed the recommendation of the committee appointed at last summer's General Convention in Indianapolis to "promote dialogue and understanding and to discuss how the canon can be implemented in every diocese of this church."

A move toward closure

While the 1976 General Convention of the Episcopal Church voted that canons on ordination should apply equally to men and women, the bishops of four out of the 118 dioceses and jurisdictions currently do not ordain women or recognize their ministry in the church.

The 1997 General Convention still must adopt the actual language suggested by the committee that would clarify the mandatory nature of the ordination policy, but the bishops' statement was seen as a clear indication that those changes are likely to be approved.

"This church is looking to this house to exercise leadership," said Bishop Robert Rowley of Northwestern Pennsylvania, chair of the committee, in explaining why a resolution had been sought. "We need to say as a House of Bishops that we're going to fully implement the canon on ordination. This decision is not being made today. This decision was made 19 years ago."

In opening what proved to be an intense but civil debate, Rowley stressed that the proposed canonical language does not prohibit those opposed to women's ordination from holding that belief as a matter of conscience. But, he said, "You cannot institutionalize your individual conscience" when it contradicts the stated position of the church.

"Our proposal is designed to protect people's conscience," said Bishop Frank Allen of Atlanta. "We can respect one another in our theological differences--but the notion of conscience has all too often been used to circumvent what we believe, and has been used as a cloak to enable individuals to do whatever they think is right in their own eyes.

Allen continued, "Conscience must be respected but conscience should not be used to erect a barrier to the legitimate calling of women to ordained ministry in any diocese of this church."

"I believe in wriggle room," stated Bishop David Joslin of Central New York, arguing that the proposed canonical change does provide "sufficient room for those who hold minority views to feel welcome in this church."

Permissive or mandatory canon?

Bishop William Wantland of Eau Claire, however, one of the bishops who refuse to ordain women, maintained that the vote "says quite clearly that those who follow the traditional Catholic understanding of holy orders are not to be included in this church." The other bishops are John-David Schofield of San Joaquin, Jack Iker of Fort Worth, and Keith Ackerman of Quincy.

Wantland said he expects to resign following the 1997 General Convention, should the canonical changes be approved, adding that "it's a fairly safe bet that it will pass in a fairly short order." He told a local reporter that he expects to be "a thorn in the flesh of this Protestant sect."

Wantland, one of several members of the committee who joined in a producing a minority report, argued that the 1976 ordination canon is "permissive" rather than mandatory. That's just what needs to be clarified, stated Bishop Douglas Theuner of New Hampshire. The matter of women's ordination in the church won't be fully settled, he said, "until we say this law that isn't a law is a law."

Schofield pointed out that he and other three bishops have arranged for women to be ordained to the priesthood through other dioceses, but that he still questioned whether a woman "can represent my ministry" within his own diocese.

Ackerman said during the debate that he regrets that "my entire ministry comes down to moments like this." In urging defeat of the motion he said that "I really do represent the deep pain of Anglo-Catholics" who may feel forced to leave the church.

Iker said that it was "inconsistent" for his position to be recognized as valid but then to turn around and say that "I can't act out my beliefs." He asked, "Why now this urgent need to change the way we have been dealing with this issue?" He said that the resolution would "deprive Ft. Worth the freedom other dioceses had in the past to deal with this in their own time and their own way."

A move by Bishop Peter James Lee of Virginia to introduce a substitute resolution that would have "received" the report, affirmed the ministry of women but given the four dioceses time before the 1997 General Convention to work out their own plans for

implementation, failed on a roll call vote of 101 to 57. Later Lee called attention to the fact that all four bishops who oppose the ordination of women voted in favor of the substitute.

Bishop says action creates new level of impaired communion

On the closing day, Wantland read a Statement of Concern (*Text in Newsfeatures*), signed by the four bishops and two retired bishops, in which he charged that the house "has abandoned patient dialogue and adopted authoritarian command as the way to solve the ongoing tensions." He added, "A Catholic theological position universally held for almost 2,000 years, and still embraced by a majority of the Anglican Communion, will have been banished from the life and practice of this church."

Wantland alleged that the "repressive legislation" would have a devastating affect and "create a new level of impaired communion, subverting the collegiality of the house and guaranteeing, for the first time in history, that the Episcopal Church will actively prohibit Catholic order."

Acknowledging that enforcing the canon will present difficult choices to those opposed to women's ordination, Bishop Mary Adelia McLeod of Vermont said, "There's been enough pain to last a lifetime and pass to another generation. We can't say that one hurts more than another. But the church has made a decision."

By objecting to the proposed agenda early in the meeting, a sizeable minority of the bishops demonstrated that they were willing to discuss other contentious issues facing the church. Among those identified in their table groups were: management of the Church Pension Fund; the presentment against Bishop Walter Righter; pressures on the presiding bishop; mean-spiritedness; sexuality; embezzlement; implementation of the canon on ordination.

Opening remarks set tone

In his opening remarks September 23 (*Text in Newsfeatures*), Browning outlined the anxiety facing the bishops as they meet for the first time since the decision to move to a heresy trial of retired Bishop Walter Righter for ordaining a non-celibate homosexual in 1990.

"We have been on a journey together, and maybe you are hoping that we have the maps we need for the trip ahead. Maybe you aren't even sure about why you signed up to take this trip."

Reviewing the recent history of the House of Bishops, Browning reminded the 165 active and retired bishops at the meeting that they agreed to change "the way we do business together" after heated exchanges during the 1991 General Convention meeting in Phoenix threatened the collegiality of the house.

Browning warned that "there is pressure to pull apart from one another, to form the power groups, choose up sides to lobby one another, to adopt the win/lose postures again, to revert to the old ways. There is pressure to say: let's decide. There is pressure to force decisions and answer questions that we ourselves have not framed, pressure to force clarity where no clarity is possible." He said that the bishops had "to live in the tension of ambiguity."

Browning decries "mean-spiritedness"

More serious than tension, anxiety, or ambiguity, Browning warned, "there is a mean spirit abroad in the church" fomented by "pressure groups around the church who are doing all they can to create a climate of dis-ease, who are willing to attack and diminish our church in order to gather strength for their positions.

"I believe this spirit is intolerable," Browning said. "This meanness dishonors and diminishes all of us. It has nothing to do with building up the church and our mission. It drains off energy, rather than bringing energies around a common goal. I have faith in this house to disown the mean-spiritedness and model a different way.

"We have some choices to make here," Browning said. "We can choose together to find a place on which to stand so we can make our way through difficulties. We can choose to grant one another the safety to be vulnerable. We can choose to meet on the ground of our common faith and ask God's blessing on our enterprise, or we can choose to forget the whole thing."

In its closing plenary the bishops issued a statement (*Text in Newsfeatures*) in which the bishops joined Browning in "desiring to name and confront this evil wherever it is experienced."

"We must also remember that the Anglican tradition is one of breadth and spaciousness which honors diversity, and is able to contain a wide variety of theological perspectives. In our present day the gift of Anglican comprehensiveness is all the more precious," the statement contended. "It is a gift from God, a gift we are called upon to celebrate and share."

The bishops also:

- heard reports on the embezzlement of funds by the former treasurer and the return of Clarence Pope to the Episcopal Church;

- welcomed several speakers on children's issues and visited Portland schools to demonstrate their commitment;

- continued their work on racism issues;

- heard a report from Bishop Don Wimberly of Lexington, chair of the Executive Council's administration and finance committee, about changes in financial policy and procedures at the national level, and from Bishop Charlie McNutt, the church's new chief operating officer;

- discussed in their small groups the qualities the church should look for in the presiding bishop who will be elected at the 1997 General Convention;

- joined the Rev. Margo Maris, speaking for the Committee on Sexual Exploitation, in honoring Browning and Bishop Harold Hopkins of the Office of Pastoral Development for their leadership in addressing sexual abuse, exploitation and harassment in the church.

--James H. Thrall is deputy director and James Solheim is director of news and information for the Episcopal Church. Jerry Hames, editor of *Episcopal Life*, and Michael Barwell, director of communications for the Diocese of Southern Ohio, contributed to this report.

95-1266

Interim bodies make new connections at joint meeting in Minneapolis

by James H. Thrall and James Solheim

(ENS) For the first time in history, all of the "interim bodies"--committees and commissions that serve between General Conventions--met together with several other national committees "to identify ways the Episcopal Church might function more creatively and effectively," in the words of conference consultant Sally Bucklee.

Speaking at the opening plenary of the meeting in Minneapolis October 12-15, House of Deputies President Pamela Chinnis admitted some apprehension as author of the experiment to bring all the groups to one place. "The whole idea may be a terrible one," she said. "It's never been done before and may never be done again."

But after four days of working separately as individual committees and jointly with other groups, most of the nearly 250 participants left highly pleased with the connections they had made. While a few complained that the schedule included too many interruptions of their own work, many said they had developed a deeper appreciation for their own responsibilities and the wider mission of the church.

"There was a collective feeling of surprise when in the midst of meeting with another committee we began to think of our work in a whole different way," said the Rev. Jane Garrett of Leeds, Massachusetts, co-chair of the Committee on Continuing the Dialogue on Human Sexuality. "It was kind of a collective lightbulb going off that turned us around."

Members of the Standing Commission on World Mission were "filled with hope by the commonality and common vision" they discovered with other committees, said the Rev. Ian Douglas of Cambridge, Massachusetts, chair. "How many of the issues with which they're wrestling are very similar to the ways we're moving," he said. "We found connections we didn't know we had, that we didn't know we could have," agreed Ginger Paul of Shreveport, Louisiana, co-chair of the Committee on the Status of Women.

Interim bodies reflect church's diversity

In his opening remarks, Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning told the gathered committees they were "a reminder that out of the diversity of the whole body, we are strengthened." While each of the 25 committees, which focus on such varied concerns as liturgy, social justice, sexual exploitation and church canons, had its own task, he said that all are "held together by our common vision. Out of our efforts, and by the grace of God, a cohesive whole then comes into being."

Chinnis pointed out that the meeting was another step in "a long process of structural review and reform" initiated after the 1991 General Convention in Phoenix staggered under a logjam of legislation. She assured the gathering that "the presiding bishop and I have no agenda other than to make Philadelphia (site of the 1997 General Convention) go better."

In part because Chinnis and Browning called for a similar meeting of all chairs of convention's cognate committees before last year's General Convention in Indianapolis, that convention operated far more smoothly, with only half as many resolutions submitted.

The Minneapolis gathering also offered the church's Standing Commission on the Structure of the Church an opportunity to begin fulfilling its mandate from the 1994 convention to review the church's current organization, including the committee arrangement, and to make recommendations for streamlining. As part of the schedule, each of the groups had an hour-long meeting with commission representatives. The interviews were intended to be conversations giving individual committees opportunities to express "who is the church and where is the church and what is the church," said Bucklee, a member of the Joint Standing Committee on Nominations and of Executive Council.

In meeting its mandate, the Structure Commission is addressing the fact that not only is it "a new world out there," but that it also will be "a new world within our church as well," said Betty Gilmore of Midland, Texas, chair. "We look for that 'new church' to continue to its solid biblical and theological foundation, to hold closely to our Anglican roots and principles, but we must also recognize that some of our old ways may need to be gently and reverently laid to rest."

Broadened horizons

Describing a year that "has not been easy for any of us," Chinnis said that she looked forward to the meeting "as a time for turning the corner, putting the worst of the crises behind us, shedding the gloom and focusing on the future toward which God calls us."

While participants noted with distress that most of the committee members were white and that few were under 40 years of age, John Jackson of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, a member of the Standing Commission on Church in Small Communities, gave a moving tribute to the sense of unity he experienced.

As an African American, he said, he came to the meeting "discouraged and ready to throw in the towel and quit and go my way." But thanks to the personal connections made during the four days, he said, "My belief in miracles is reaffirmed. This group reaffirms my faith."

"We were surprised at how helpful the interviews with the Structure Commission was," observed Bishop Thomas Shaw of Massachusetts, a member of the Commission on HIV/AIDS. "They asked some very good questions."

Chairs of Liturgy and Church Music commissions in particular said they felt rushed, and suggested they might arrange to come a day earlier or stay a day later should the gathering be arranged again.

"There was better potential here than I expected," said the Rev. David Norgard of San Francisco, chair of the Standing Commission on Evangelism, noting that "some of our best conversations happened after" they met with other groups. "Knowing what I know now I could make better use of it," he said.

If nothing else, the meeting "was wonderful stewardship of our time and energy," concluded the Rev. Carol Cole Flanagan of Elliott City, Maryland, chair of the Standing Commission on Health, noting that she relished "the long-distance phone calls I didn't have to make, the letters I didn't have to write because we were together."

--James H. Thrall is deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church. James Solheim is director of news and information.

95-1267

Presentment supporters and opponents speak out as Righter heresy trial approaches

by James H. Thrall and James Solheim

(ENS) As the Episcopal Church moves toward its second heresy trial in history involving a bishop, opinion remains sharply divided--and frequently expressed--over whether the accused is a heretic or a hero.

Ten bishops who brought a presentment against Bishop Walter Righter for ordaining a noncelibate homosexual man in 1990 while serving as assistant bishop in the Diocese of Newark have charged that his action violates church doctrine. Others who have rallied to Righter's cause maintain he is a scapegoat unfairly targeted for doing what many other bishops have done.

The charge against Righter will be heard by the nine-member Court for the Trial of a Bishop in Chicago January 3-5.

According to Bishop Edward Jones of Indianapolis, president of the court, the site was chosen because Chicago is accessible for travel; the trial will be held at the offices of the Diocese of Chicago whose cathedral next door will be used for prayer to undergird the deliberations; and the site is "neutral."

Members of the court also have approved appointment of A. Hugo Blankingship, Jr., of Fairfax, Virginia, as Church Advocate to serve as legal adviser to those who brought the presentment charges against Righter last January.

The canon laws of the church stipulate that the court select no fewer than two or more than three Lay Assessors, confirmed adult communicants in good standing who are learned in the law to advise the court on any non-theological question. That selection process is already under way, Jones reported. Righter will be represented by Michael Rehill, chancellor of the Diocese of Newark.

An issue of discipline and collegiality

Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning forestalled any outbreak of the "Righter debate" on the floor of the recent House of Bishops meeting in Portland by stressing that the case is in the hands of the court and that discussion by the house would be inappropriate.

But in other forums the debate goes on as both supporters and opponents of the presentment argue the merits of the charge while explaining their own positions in bishops' columns in diocesan newspapers, letters and on-line computer discussion groups.

Giving voice to sentiments expressed as well by the other presenting bishops, Bishop Terence Kelshaw of the Diocese of the Rio Grande maintained Righter has failed to live out his vows as a bishop to teach and defend the gospel, and to serve as "guardian of the faith and overseer of God's people."

Righter "acted contrary to the church's teaching, and by so doing violated his ordination vows," Kelshaw wrote in a column explaining his decision to be one of the 10

presenting bishops. "The presentment is not about homosexuality," he wrote. "Neither is it about rights. The presentment is about Episcopal anarchy."

Bishop Dorsey Henderson of Upper South Carolina, who was not one of the presenting bishops and did not join the 76 bishops whose support moved the case to trial, nevertheless echoed Kelshaw's concern. "We bishops show an increasing tendency to act on private revelation rather than in accordance with the Anglican way of doing theology--that is, as a community," he wrote in a letter to the other bishops. Such individual actions, he argued, "result in disunity and disorder."

Henderson argued against proceeding with the presentment because it would only increase the disunity. He urged instead a period of prayerful study of the issues.

Supporters rally to Righter

Meanwhile, supporters of Righter, concerned that as a retired bishop he is ill-equipped to cover the high cost of the trial, have established a defense fund through the Diocese of Newark.

In a liturgical show of support, St. Luke's in Montclair, New Jersey, served as the site for a choral evensong in early October celebrating the ministry of Righter and the Rev. Barry Stopfel, the priest he ordained. The service highlighted as well the work of The Oasis, the Diocese of Newark's ministry with gay people, their families and friends.

Supporters of Righter also have been invited by Peg Dengel of the Diocese of Newark to show their concern by wearing a purple and lavender lapel pin. The colors, she explained, represent the episcopacy and the ministry of gays and lesbians. Donations, she said, are being passed on to the Bishop Righter defense fund.

In mid-October, the rector of St. Paul's in Paterson, New Jersey, was moved to make her own very personal show of solidarity as she took the difficult step of announcing publicly to her congregation that she is a lesbian. "I have decided that I cannot allow Bishop Righter or my friend Barry Stopfel to stand alone," wrote the Rev. Tracy Lind in a letter to her congregation. "I am not coming out because I want to talk about my sexuality; rather I am coming out because the gospel demands it for the sake of justice."

The church's vestry unanimously approved a resolution affirming and supporting Lind and promising to "stand ready to protect and defend" her. In affirming her "public witness as an openly gay priest," they also stated that "we understand this action to be consistent with the ministry and mission of St. Paul's Episcopal Church."

While they were unable to debate the matter as a house, 35 bishops signed a statement of support (*see Newsfeatures section*) for Righter following the Portland meeting. "Walter Righter's trial is a trial of the Gospel, a trial of justice, a trial of fairness, and a trial of the Church," they wrote. "We stand with Bishop Righter. We feel charged as Bishop Righter is charged. We feel on trial as Bishop Righter is on trial. Should he be found guilty, we are guilty."

Calls for prayer

The board of directors of Integrity, the national organization for gay and lesbian Episcopalians, has called for January 2, the eve of the trial, to be a national day of prayer. The Committee on the Status of Women also is calling for noonday prayers remembering all

those involved in the trial, starting in Advent, as well as a prayer vigil beginning January 2 and continuing through the duration of the trial.

--James H. Thrall is deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church. James Solheim is director of news and information.

95-1268

Diocese of Alaska struggles with cultural differences and loss of its first Native bishop

by James E. Solheim

(ENS) As the clouds moved lower into the valleys and the cold rains of impending winter persisted, Alaska's Episcopalians gathered in Sitka October 5-8 for the diocesan convention--and what turned out to be a bittersweet celebration of a centennial.

A hundred years ago the diocese was formed with the election of a first bishop for Alaska and now the delegates were faced with planning for the election of a new bishop following the recent resignation of the Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston for what he cited as "family reasons." Still struggling with some feelings of denial and anger, the 90 representatives of the sprawling diocese almost 10 times the size of New England listened as their dynamic young bishop shared his deepest hopes for their future--a future without his leadership.

"We stand at a crossroads, a threshold," the bishop said in his opening comments, "a very powerful and emotional time." He talked very frankly about "a lonely and terrible feeling" he felt as he searched for God's presence in his life in the midst of personal and professional doubts.

"It's so painful because the vision was so clear, the hope so real, because it was so right," Charleston said in describing his five years as the first Native American bishop. "We felt a new energy and vitality in what we were doing together. We were on the right track. We were going to become a new diocese, a new community--a tolerant, loving, caring community."

Charleston contended that Alaska was on its way to serving as "a model of what the Christian community will be in the next century," and he urged them to express that new confidence in and through the convention. "We must keep the energy and momentum going."

Making an interim choice

The first test for the convention was a choice on how episcopal oversight would be handled until the election of a new bishop--and when that election should take place.

In discussing the option of electing at a convention next fall or entering a period of

self-examination and electing in two years, a third alternative emerged. The delegates decided to hire a consultant to work with the search committee, elect a new bishop in the spring of 1997 and seek a "supply bishop" for oversight during that period.

Some of the cultural tensions that are part of the realities of the diocese emerged during the discussion. The small, struggling Native parishes and missions of the interior and the Arctic said that they were in the midst of spiritual growth and needed a strong leadership to avoid losing momentum. "Our whole world has been turned upside down," said Jonathan Solomon from Ft. Yukon. On the other hand, the stronger, better-organized parishes in the south didn't see the need to rush a decision about a new bishop.

The tensions also surfaced during discussion of location for the administrative/financial office of the diocese, whether or not to move it from the Anchorage area in the south to the diocesan offices in Fairbanks in the center of the state. The roll-call vote followed cultural and geographic lines and the convention officially decided to move the office north--and to hold the next diocesan convention in the Fairbanks area.

As uncomfortable as the discussion became at points, it was also a clear sign that the Native parishes had taken their place in the governance of the diocese. As one Native delegate from the Yukon pointed out, when he first attended the convention years ago he was alone. Now he has been joined by many others from the Yukon and Arctic and together they represent half the parishes of the diocese.

The vote on moving the office was challenged because, if it was presented as a resolution, it required a two-thirds vote, but only a simple majority was needed for a motion. The next morning Charleston defused the situation by urging delegates to recognize their differences, especially the cultural ones. "Like any Christian community we have to learn the Gospel skill of listening to each other, working on compromises," he said. When he asked if anyone was prepared to further challenge his decision to let the earlier vote stand, or to change their votes, no one responded and the convention moved on.

But there was still one more emotional flash-point waiting.

'Be the church in Alaska'

The final plenary session was proceeding smoothly until an Athabascan woman asked for moment of personal privilege.

With a trembling voice, Polly Simmonds of Fairbanks read a statement from the interior deanery, expressing how excited they were when a Native bishop was elected, "someone who can relate to the issues that we, as Native people, face economically, emotionally, educationally and spiritually."

"We as Indian people are a very spiritual people and we felt that you in some way understood this," she added. While expressing sympathy for the demands of the office, and promising to "walk with you in your journey with your family," she concluded: "Now hear our voice, a voice that is also hurting and grieving. You gave us hope that we as Native people can be leaders; that we can deal with our own issues in a responsible, reasonable way; and that we can raise our voices to be heard. It is with great sadness that we ponder over your decision--and we ask that you reconsider your resignation."

Charleston was speechless. The delegates discussed a few more items on the agenda while he considered his response. Then he stepped forward and said, "I feel strongly that I

failed most of you in my calling--and my family, too. I could not, being who I am as a person, find enough strength to be all that you needed, and that my family needed, at the same time." He said that his individual personhood had gotten lost in his office but that he was now prepared to "start again as a disciple of Christ."

"My brokenness must not be your brokenness," he said urgently. "You are the church. Individually you are as sinful as I am, but collectively you are holy and sacred. Together you are the dream of Jesus when he hung on the cross--the dream of a holy people, entrusted in your care, inspired by the Holy Spirit to live it out every day. Hold that dream dear, be worthy of the trust of God... Be the church in Alaska."

Delegates sitting near the window pointed to a stunning double rainbow that had suddenly appeared over the Sitka harbor.

Renewed and refreshed

The centennial banquet drew heavily on memories of the first century of the church in Alaska. It included greetings from two former bishops, the widow of a third and the son of the first bishop--and Tlingit and Russian dancers.

"Steve has brought you to this springtime of spiritual excitement and energy," said Bishop George Harris, Charleston's predecessor. "He has made his gift--now you are invited to make yours."

During a final Eucharist, including confirmations of 20, convention participants seemed to demonstrate that they were ready to meet the challenge. In what one delegate described as a "transcendent and humbling experience," the service focused all the hopes and dreams that had been flowing through the convention.

"They left renewed and refreshed," Charleston said later in an interview. "We all felt such a strong, powerful, spiritual feeling," he said, convinced that "we are on the way to becoming a diocese that is able to honor our differences and serve as God's messengers in Alaska."

--James Solheim is director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.

95-1269

Woman elected diocesan bishop in Rhode Island

by James H. Thrall

(ENS) The Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island elected the Very Rev. Geralyn Wolf, dean of Christ Church Cathedral in Louisville, Kentucky, as the 12th bishop of Rhode Island, September 30. Pending confirmation of her election by a majority of diocesan bishops and standing committees, Wolf will become the fifth female bishop of the Episcopal Church and the second female bishop to head a diocese.

In an initial field of candidates that included four women and five men before one man dropped out, "I didn't feel that gender was an issue at all," Wolf said. "You couldn't coalesce around a woman just because you wanted a woman. You had to get into their

personality and skills."

Perhaps, she said, "we're moving on to a routine that simply says men and women can be elected bishop."

Her election in 1988 as the first female cathedral dean actually brought more publicity, and was just as surprising to her, she said. One of the earliest women ordained a priest, "I was hoping some day I would have partial oversight of a parish," she told the *Courier-Journal* newspaper of Louisville. "And I never even dreamed of being a bishop or a dean."

Election offered full slate of candidates

Wolf was one of four out-of-state candidates, including three women, put forward by the diocesan search committee. Another five Rhode Island priests were nominated from the floor. When the Rev. Robert Anthony of Christ Church, Westerly, who was expected to draw many of the conservative votes, withdrew at the beginning of the convention, observers said those votes seemed to shift to Wolf and the Rev. Canon Clifton "Dan" Daniels of St. Michael's, Bristol, one of the nominees from the floor, who finished second.

Wolf's election is "a real sign of the full welcome of women into the life and the power structure of our communion," said Bishop Edwin F. Gulick of Kentucky. Describing her as a "wonderful theologian and wonderful preacher," Gulick said he was "real excited that her mind is in the House of Bishops at this time in our history."

"She is a very deeply spiritual person, but not in an overbearing way," Christ Church treasurer Wallace Johnson told the *Courier-Journal*. "She has a quiet style of leadership that really comes through; she's not a raving social activist, but in very subtle ways she is."

Wolf said, "I try as best I can to speak the truth the way I see it. At times I've been vulnerable and taken risks in my ministry, both personally and in the name of the community." She also described herself as "feisty" and "multi-faceted."

Honoring the questions

"I don't easily align myself with groups because I find I don't fit into any neat categories. I can be somewhat contradictory and ambiguous in my own being," she said. "I'm surprised myself at where I find myself going and being and feeling." The gift of Anglicanism, she said, is that "we've honored the questions and we don't have to have the answers. That's what I find exciting about faith."

Initially, she said, she plans to "get to know the people of Rhode Island, the state of Rhode Island," she said. "I don't come with solutions. I come as one who shares in the way."

Wolf graduated from Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge and was ordained in Philadelphia in 1978. Prior to serving as dean in Louisville, Wolf served parishes in the Diocese of Pennsylvania. She is an avid athlete and an artist who has exhibited work in various galleries.

--James H. Thrall is deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church. This article includes material from a press release from the Diocese of Rhode Island and an article in the *Courier-Journal* newspaper of Louisville.

95-1270

Conciliatory tone marks Episcopal Women's Caucus in Fort Worth

(ENS) Buoyed by a strong affirmation of women's ordination by the House of Bishops (*see separate article*), the Episcopal Women's Caucus took a conciliatory tone as it carried its call for equality into a bastion of opposition, the Diocese of Fort Worth.

"We are here in Fort Worth for solidarity," the Rev. Cynthia L. Black, caucus president, told the more than 100 women and some men who attended the annual meeting under the theme "Power Tools for Women," September 29-October 1. Women in other dioceses who enjoy the privilege of ordination should always remember those barred by the policies of their bishops in Fort Worth and three other dioceses, she said.

Under current practices, a little girl growing up in Fort Worth who wanted to be a priest would have a bleak future, Black noted. "All of the internal sense of ability and perseverance that could have possibly been instilled in her by her parents wouldn't have mattered one bit in the face of a determined bishop," she said. "She wouldn't have stood a chance."

More than 20 women from the Diocese of Fort Worth attended. "We feel so isolated from the rest of the church," one of them said.

The tide appears to be turning, conference speakers noted, especially as the bishops meeting in Portland shortly before the caucus conference affirmed that the canon approving women's ordination should be mandatory in all dioceses. Still, the speakers said, both vigilance and compassion are needed as the issue moves to a final vote at the 1997 General Convention.

Dangers of 'oppressing former oppressors'

Preaching at the conference Eucharist--held in a synagogue because the caucus was not permitted to use any local Episcopal church--television commentator Katie Sherrod warned against the temptation of vengeance.

It is easy to "write off another human being, discount her, trivialize him, especially those who have written us off at one time or another," she said. "Who hasn't fantasized about 'getting even,' or thought, 'I'll show them.' Or, most tempting of all, 'Just wait until I'm in power. They'll get theirs!' But that way lies disaster. Oppressing former oppressors is the worst thing any of us can do, not only to them, but to ourselves."

In a resolution welcoming the bishops' mind-of-the-house statement, the caucus maintained that "no one was victorious and no one was defeated by this action," and pledged to extend "its hand in love and friendship to all in our church." The resolution also offers to "assist in any way" in implementing the canon on ordination and calls on Executive Council to continue the committee whose work led to the bishops' vote.

Keynote speaker Pamela Darling, author of *New Wine, the Story of Women Transforming Leadership and Power in the Episcopal Church*, stressed that "we need to be celebrating here--here in Fort Worth where women have not been allowed to celebrate, in

this Episcopal Church where after 20 years our bishops are still agonizing over the ordination of women." For all that, she said, "we need to celebrate because despite those painful realities, we are still the church."

Needing the proper tools

She also warned against using "the 'power tools' of patriarchy--force, intimidation, harassment, violence, coercion" in trying to dismantle patriarchy. "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house," she said.

Instead, she said, women should use the voices they have to "speak the truth, to resist the countless pressures and inducements to be silent, to insist that our voices be heard--not because they are our voices, but because we have something to say that others cannot say, something that needs to be heard, something the church needs to hear."

Darling said traditionalists are correct in calling the issue momentous. "The dramatic changes in women's roles in society in the past several generations have called into question all the other assumptions about human behavior, about our relationship to our Creator, about the nature of our redemption, about where the wind of the Spirit is taking us, all those assumptions that had seemed immutable, 'natural,' and God-given," she said. "This is scary. Let's not pretend that it's not. Let's not demean our traditionalist brothers and sisters by asserting that it's no big deal, or that their fears are groundless, or that we are not changing the 'church of their youth.'"

As women, she said, "we must witness to them--not through bitter argument but by letting them see in our lives that these changes are the fruit of the Spirit, that liberation from the old ways is not a corruption of God's plan but the next step in its fulfillment."

Power as it has been misused in the church tends to marginalize, exploit and deprive women of their autonomy, said Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, associate professor of theology and ethics at Drew University's theological School. "Even though women are represented in large numbers, the church is still of the patriarchal world," she said. The church needs to move from exercising "power over" to extending "power to," she said.

--Based on a report by Lucy Germany, a free-lance writer in Big Sandy, Texas.

95-1271

World Council of Churches Central Committee struggles with issues of unity

by James H. Thrall

(ENS) Struggling with severe financial challenges and questions about the role the World Council of Churches should play in the future of ecumenism, the WCC's Central Committee meeting in Geneva in September nevertheless issued strong and unified statements on issues ranging from Bosnia to nuclear testing.

The mingling of perspectives from the 150 representatives of member churches who

make up the Central Committee offered a fascinating window on the ecumenical world, both in the differences and in the shared concerns, said Pamela Chinnis, president of the House of Deputies, who represented Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning at the meeting. "You certainly get your horizons expanded," she said.

The Central Committee supervises the work of the council and its staff between assemblies, which are held every seven years.

A demonstration of unity

In an unusual and concrete sign of solidarity, the committee marched *en masse* to the nearby United Nations office building to protest nuclear arms testing by China and particularly by France, which conducted much-criticized tests in the Morurua Atoll in the Pacific Ocean. Jacques Ihorai, president of the Evangelical Church of French Polynesia, a WCC member church, thanked the committee for supporting "the peaceful struggle of the Pacific peoples against nuclear tests."

Given that "things are often so divided" in the 330-member council, "I don't think that happens very often in the Central Committee," noted the Rev. David Perry, the Episcopal Church's ecumenical officer. The committee prayed and sang hymns outside the U.N. office, he said, including Polynesian songs emphasizing the environment.

The committee also adopted a statement condemning exclusivist claims on Jerusalem that echoed statements endorsed by Browning. Describing Jerusalem as a place of "deep religious, historical and emotional attachments" for Christians, Jews and Muslims, the committee called for freedom of access to holy places for all three faiths, among other rights, and repeated its opposition to Israel's unilateral annexation of East Jerusalem.

In a three-page message, the committee also appealed to religious, political and military leaders in the former Yugoslavia to end the war there and begin "to heal the deep wounds of history . . . and to transform the climate of hatred and violence." While expressing hope about recent diplomatic steps toward resolution, the statement also condemned the "reprehensible escalation of the cycle of violence" fed by a continued flow of arms.

Struggles to express a common faith

Differences emerged, Chinnis said, in disagreement over whether the next assembly, scheduled for September 10-22, 1998, in Harare, Zimbabwe, should include a eucharistic service. Because some member churches, particularly Orthodox and Roman Catholic, would not participate, holding a Eucharist would highlight the divisions that remain, Orthodox representatives argued. But many Protestant speakers said failure to include the Eucharist would send the wrong signal to the world and be an occasion for further division.

"I'm glad that's finally out on the table," said Perry. "It's important in our ecumenical conversations to dig deeper into our inability to share Communion."

While Anglicans have "our own eucharistic norms as well" that have to be considered in an ecumenical Eucharist, "because of our diversity and the way our Communion works I think we have some models the council can look at" when it wrestles with difficult issues, Perry said. "I think the Anglican Communion has had an important role to play in the council," he added, particularly in demonstrating "how we make decisions and what

consensus means."

The committee is expected to decide about the service at its next meeting in September, 1996.

Concern was also raised about the safety of homosexual delegates to the assembly, given strongly anti-homosexual statements made by Zimbabwe's president Robert Mugabe. While assurances have been given that the delegates will not be harassed, "that's not the point," said Chinnis. She said she argued that "we need to protect the rights of all."

The committee also highlighted a WCC study, "Towards a Common Understanding and Vision of the World Council of Churches," that it is hoped the Harare assembly will adopt as a statement of the WCC's future shape. In his opening address to the committee, WCC General Secretary Konrad Raiser raised the question of how, in an era of increasing fragmentation of the ecumenical movement, the council could help create "an inclusive framework" for dialogue among all ecumenical partners, including the Roman Catholic Church (which is not now a full member), other non-member churches, and even ecumenical organizations that are not actual churches.

Financial woes still trouble WCC

The search for new models is prompted in part, Raiser admitted, by the need to deal with dwindling resources. A financial shortfall, brought on by a combination of unwise investments, lack of support from some member churches, and a weak dollar, continues to plague the council, though the committee was assured by finance committee moderator Birgitta Rantakari that the WCC is not in "a financial crisis, so long as urgent pro-active steps are taken."

Since the WCC operates in Swiss francs, but gets many of its contributions in dollars, having a weak dollar has cut its expected income. More than half of the member churches, many of whom are struggling with their own financial difficulties, failed to contribute at all in 1994, which led the committee to approve a recommended minimum membership donation.

While the Episcopal Church has been unable to pay its full asking in recent years, it has been committed to supporting the WCC, Perry said. "We always pay what we say we're going to pay."

--James H. Thrall is deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church. This article includes material from a World Council of Churches news release by John Newberry, WCC press and information officer.

95-1272

World Mission group floats bold proposal for church reorganization

by Nan Cobbey

(ENS) The Standing Commission on World Mission is spreading a story dangerous to the status quo.

Meeting with other national committees in Minneapolis last month, members told of an experience that has given them a new vision for the Episcopal Church, a vision that calls into question top-down decision-making and executive power. It is the story of the Episcopal Council for Global Mission (ECGM) and it is attracting adherents for a reorganized church.

The story taps into perceptions that conflict and crises are driving a wedge between the present leadership and "people in the pews." As one commission member put it, "Much of our church is in total disconnect ... and if we don't find a new way to work together we will soon be two churches."

Edwina Thomas, director of Sharing of Ministries Abroad (SOMA), made that comment as she explained the commission's vision first to Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning and House of Deputies President Pamela Chinnis, then to emissaries from the Commission on Church Structure. As word spread, members of commissions and committees on Evangelism, the State of the Church, Status of Women and others asked to be filled in. Some responded with enthusiasm to what commission members are calling their "Vision for Discussion." Others warned of pitfalls.

The story of ECGM seems to elicit such curiosity because it illustrates how people who disagree violently on politics and theology can hold opposing views and still work together.

A violent first meeting

It all started in 1988 when "missions people"--those involved in sending missionaries overseas--gathered to establish a coalition. The meeting fell apart as different perceptions of the mission task collided.

"I thought there was going to be a fist fight," said Thomas, a conservative Evangelical. The groups were so far apart in their goals and beliefs that they packed up and went home.

The next year, deciding to try again, they hired facilitators. "We locked ourselves up in a retreat center and did some repentance," recalls Thomas. "We set covenants. One of these says that although we have different theologies, we agree to work together and respect each other."

The council was established in 1990, and today has more than 30 organizational members: missionary societies, voluntary agencies, dioceses, individual congregations, seminaries and corporate parishes like Trinity Wall Street. Theologically, they are as diverse a lot as can be found in the church. Yet that "covenanted agreement" enables evangelicals determined to save "unreached peoples" and liberals focused on empowering the oppressed to work together and even encourage each other.

"Here is a body that is really diverse, but we move by consensus. Everybody gets an equal vote," says Thomas. "National church officers sit at the table with us.... We have a circular model of leadership."

Now commission members suggest that model, with its covenants, might be a corrective, a possible prescription for what they perceive to be an ailing national church.

Expanded task and challenge

Charged by General Convention in 1994 with developing new strategies and structures for sending missionaries, the Standing Commission on World Mission decided early on to widen its focus. "A new understanding of the scope, organizational structure and constitution of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society is called for," members wrote in their "Vision" statement distributed in Minneapolis.

They described their idea of a series of coalitions like ECGM, not just for world mission and the sending of missionaries, but for all those groups and organizations involved in mission in whatever capacity--evangelism, Christian education, advocacy.

The "Vision" statement suggests that the Episcopal Church "consider re-forming the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society to become less focused on general program delivery and more oriented towards a 'network of networks'," with each network coalition, coordinated by a central person, linked to every other through those central liaison people. They discussed making salaries of those coordinators a joint responsibility of networks and the Society.

Such a reorganization would mean a change in power and authority which, according to Thomas, would no longer come "from the top down" but from the grassroots up. "Energy would come from the people in the pews who can connect into this network any time they want."

Admitting that the proposal could be seen as "fairly revolutionary," the Rev. Ian Douglas, commission chair and a founding member of ECGM, said, "We are recognizing that the [Episcopal Church Center] as provider of program, services, goods, has been declining since the 1960s. We're saying ... how do we move to another model ... a model of networking, a network of networks."

Reaction and remarks

As talk of the proposal spread in Minneapolis, members of other commissions asked to be filled in. Initially skeptical, some, like Sally Bucklee of the Joint Standing Committee on Nominations, former president of Episcopal Women's Caucus, came to share the enthusiasm.

Douglas told commission members that Bucklee "got very excited about the idea" when she realized how much like the Council for Women's Ministries operation it was.

The Rev. Canon Patrick Mauney, Anglican and Global Relations executive, warned that the proposal was "very revolutionary," and that "peoples' immediate reaction is going to be defensive." He added that the proposal could "generate a tremendous amount of energy and creativity."

Browning expressed uneasiness and suggested the proposal be shared with Mauney's staff and asked how the entity envisioned would relate to the Executive Council and General

Convention. Douglas told him that wasn't yet clear and that the commission would continue discussing it.

George Lockwood, a seven-term deputy to General Convention who sits on the World Mission Commission not as a member but as a personal representative of House of Deputies President Chinnis, had words of caution for his colleagues. He said the priority of a network of networks was "sound and essential," but not at the expense of national programs. "There is still need for centralized management, centralized leadership."

The Rev. Durstan McDonald, dean of the Seminary of the Southwest and member of the Commission on Church Structure, called the vision "exciting" and told commission members he was as concerned as they that national funding not become a way of making some programs "official" and others, especially those from the grassroots, "unofficial."

The Rev. John Guernsey, member of the State of the Church Commission, heard Thomas explain the vision, then carried it to the Commission on Evangelism, suggesting they try to organize a similar coalition. "I have become painfully aware of the tensions between evangelical groups in the church," said the three-time chair of General Convention's Committee on Evangelism. "I am concerned ... to find a way to bridge that gap."

Editor's note: copies of the "Vision for Discussion" are available from the Rev. Ian Douglas at Episcopal Divinity School, 99 Brattle St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

--Nan Cobbey is features editor for *Episcopal Life* newspaper.



news briefs

95-1273

Search committee for treasurer moves toward decision

(ENS) The search committee for the new treasurer of the Episcopal Church moved forward in its work by unanimously selecting fewer than 10 nominees out of an application pool of 200 at a recent meeting according to a report from the committee. The nominees meet with the committee for an in-person interview on October 23 and 24. According to the report, the first in-person interviews will be conducted without participation of Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning and President of the House of Deputies Pamela Chinnis. The committee will then select "a very small number (even as few as one person)" to meet with Browning and Chinnis. Following this, it is anticipated that an offer will be extended to the person selected to fill the position of treasurer of the Episcopal Church.

Canadian Lutherans move toward full communion with Anglicans

(ENS) The national convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) recently approved a recommendation that lay people of the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) and the ELCIC be able to move freely between each other's churches as the two bodies move toward full communion by 2001. Responding to the convention action, ACC Archbishop Michael Peers asked bishops of both churches to invite neighboring Lutheran and Anglican congregations to commit themselves to undertake at least one joint project and celebrate at least one joint communion service yearly. The second was to request that both bodies develop structures for evaluating and improving the ministry of the bishop. Peers acknowledged that not all Anglican bishops would allow Lutheran pastors to serve congregants in the Anglican Church.

Anglican consultation discusses liturgical guidelines

(ACNS) More than 70 Anglican liturgists met in Dublin recently to discuss and identify the principles and guidelines which the provinces of the Anglican Communion should consider in the revision and development of eucharistic liturgies during the coming years. The consultation affirmed that, in the future, Anglican unity will find its liturgical expression not so much in uniform texts as in a common approach to eucharistic celebration and a structure which will ensure a balance of word, prayer, and sacrament. The principles also affirmed the relationship between baptism and the eucharist, noting that all the baptized are called to share at the table without exclusion on such grounds as age, race, gender, economic

circumstance, or mental capacity, and that celebration of the eucharist involves renewal of the baptismal commitment to conversion of both personal and social life. Their meeting, the fifth in a series of International Anglican Liturgical Consultations held during the last decade, took place at the Church of Ireland Education College in Dublin. Previous consultations have considered communion of children, inculturation, and issues related to initiation. The principles and recommendations of the Dublin consultation address a growing concern that Anglican identity will be lost as liturgical variety increases.

Anglican youth meeting planned

(ACNS) The steering committee of the International Anglican Youth Network (IAYN) met recently to discuss plans for three upcoming events: Anglican Youth Sunday, November 25; the proposed conference for Anglican youth from across the Communion in 1997; and youth participation in the 1998 Lambeth Conference. The meeting was a partial response to resolution 40 of the joint meeting of the primates and the Anglican Consultative Council in Cape Town in 1993, which called for the revitalization of IAYN. The last meeting of the full network was held in London in February, 1994.

Zimbabwean church council condemns homosexuality

(ACNS) Homosexuality is "totally new and out of step with the Zimbabwean tradition and culture," according to a recent statement issued by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) that follows an increasingly strident campaign against gays and lesbians by Zimbabwe president Robert Mugabe. The ZCC's president Bishop Jonathan Siyachitema said that Zimbabweans should not be coerced into a practice [homosexuality] which is totally alien to them." Mugabe's campaign has aroused concern in international church circles because the next assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) is to take place in 1998 in the Zimbabwean capital of Harare, at the invitation of the ZCC. The WCC's general secretary Konrad Raiser has said that there are "deep divisions" among the WCC's 324 member Churches on the "theological and ethical issues of human sexuality and sexual orientation." Raiser said that he would seek assurances from the Zimbabwe government "regarding the entry and safety of all bona fide participants of the assembly" and the "freedom of the assembly in setting its agenda and in expressing its mind."

Orthodox say proselytism is an obstacle to unity

(CWS) Orthodox leaders recently said that Protestant and Catholic proselytism in eastern Europe is a serious obstacle to improving ties between those churches and Orthodox Christians. The two churches split in 1054 over the power of the papacy, but Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, the spiritual head of the Orthodox churches and organizer of the summit, has been trying to revive a dialogue with the Catholic Church. Recent efforts by Bartholomew, based in Istanbul, Turkey, to reunite them have been hurt by what the Orthodox perceive to be an encroachment by Catholics into eastern Europe and traditionally Russian Orthodox regions. After a three-day closed-door meeting, 12 of the world's 15 Orthodox patriarchs said that the other churches' activities in eastern Europe "are serious obstacles to the progress of our dialogue."

Australian Anglicans debate lay presidency

(ACNS) The Sydney Anglican diocesan synod recently voted to defer the third reading of its ordinance for preaching and administration of holy communion by lay persons and deacons. In moving the motion for deferral until 1996, synod member John Woodhouse said that cogent arguments questioning the status of any kind of lay ministry had been advanced by the archbishops of Perth and Sydney and that these arguments should be considered over the next 12 months. Woodhouse said, "18 years to get to this point has been a long time, but 19 years is not much longer." He affirmed that the issue needed to be addressed because "it has to do with recognizing that the prohibition that is perceived to exist around this one activity in church conveys to many people seriously false ideas about what a priest is, and what the sacrament is. We cannot allow the situation to continue where lay persons or deacons who are qualified to preach the word of God in church are under no circumstances ever qualified to administer the Lord's Supper."

Theologian says new global ethic needed for world peace

(ENI) Without peace between religions there can be no peace between nations, Swiss theologian Hans Küng said recently. "Today's priority is to create a new global ethic," he said, pointing to the fact that hundreds of millions of people face unemployment, poverty, and the disintegration of their families in a world dominated by corruption and irrational consumption. In such a situation, he said, religion was very often abused for political purposes, exacerbating confrontation and warfare. But religion could also play a significant role in putting an end to wars and avoiding wars altogether. "The major change in South Africa would not have been possible without the decisive role played by the South African Council of Churches," he declared. "In the same way, the Catholic Church of the Philippines has acted as a vehicle of non-violent radical change." Such change illustrates the importance of a "peace between religions" as a first step towards peace between nations, he said, adding that this needed to be accompanied by a strong coalition between believers and non-believers, without which democracy had no possibility of surviving.

Commissions combine efforts to provide music to small parishes

(ENS) The Standing Commission on Church Music and the Standing Commission on Church in Small Communities recently announced that they will combine efforts to provide a music resource for the very small parish (10-15 in attendance on Sunday morning). In a test program during 1995-1996, 35 parishes will receive a packet of materials containing several songs and hymns as well as suggestions of refrains to be used as congregational responses for psalms, prayers or Gospel acclamations. The first packets go out in November in time for Advent, with packets for Lent and then summer completing the test cycle. "Our joint endeavor is an exciting venture for our congregations searching for just the right music," said Allen Brown, executive officer for rural/small community ministries. Once the test period is completed, the commissions plan to offer packets on a subscription basis to small parishes throughout the American church. "This much needed resource affirms the importance of worship in these parishes and validates the need of God's people to make music in a way most accessible to them," said the Rev. Clay Morris, liturgical officer for the Episcopal Church.

Church leaders ask Clinton to oppose budget cuts

(ENS) In a recent letter to President Clinton, U.S. church leaders argued that budget cuts should not be focused on low income and marginalized people. "The cuts being proposed are not based in wise public policy," the letter said. "We name them for what they are--an assault on those least able to defend themselves in order to reach self-imposed budget goals that include tax breaks for the more fortunate." The church leaders urged Clinton to "speak out publicly to defend justice and compassion as key standards of public policy and to veto any Reconciliation Bill that: destroys the entitlement status of hunger, health, welfare and jobs programs that serve low income and marginal people; has severe cuts in such programs that would eliminate valuable services that are currently being provided; and increases the tax burden of the poor or gives a tax break to the more fortunate in our society at the expense of maintaining services and benefits for low-income and marginalized people."

People

The Rev. David Harris, an editor with the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, has been named editor of the *Anglican Journal/Journal Anglican*. Harris, who holds an Master of Arts degree in theology from Oxford University, became a reporter with the *Chronicle-Herald* in May, 1987, and a general editor in April, 1991. In November, 1994, Harris was appointed religion editor for the *Chronicle-Herald* and its sister publication, the *Mail-Star*. He praised the *Journal* for its attempt to be well-rounded and broadly representative of the church. "I think editorially it can become even broader, and in style and design I think it can be more focused and reader-friendly," he said.

Barney Pityana, former director of the World Council of Churches' program to combat racism, has been elected chairperson of the newly constituted Human Rights Commission in South Africa. Pityana, an Anglican priest exiled during the apartheid era, was one of 11 people appointed by President Nelson Mandela to the commission which was formally launched on October 2. He said that the commission was not a formal government body but it had the powers to keep the government in check with regard to the human rights clauses in the new constitution. Compared with the culture under the apartheid regime when human rights were totally ignored, the fact that this commission has been instituted is a significant development," he said. "It shows the government is serious to create a culture of human rights."

Patrick Gahan, head chaplain at St. Stephen's Episcopal School in Austin, Texas, has been named executive director of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge/USA (SPCK). Gahan, who has a master of divinity degree from the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest, has served as assistant to the rector at Christ Church in Tyler, Texas, and director of development at St. Andrew's-Sewanee School. He said that he plans to continue several of the initiatives conducted by SPCK, including the Adopt-a-Seminary program, which provides books for seminaries around the world, and sponsoring Russian seminarians, as well as developing new projects in Newfoundland, Haiti and Mexico. Robert Rust,

chairman of SPCK's board of trustees, said "We conducted a nationwide search for the next generation of leadership at SPCK and we found, in Patrick, someone who is an outstanding leader. We feel that we have someone who can have a profound impact on the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion."

The Rt. Rev. Richard Chartres, the area bishop of Stepney in the Diocese of London, has been appointed the new Bishop of London to succeed the Rt. Rev. David Hope who has been appointed Archbishop of York. Chartres voted against the legislation to ordain women to the priesthood in 1992 and has never ordained a woman priest. He will continue the practice of Bishop Hope in the diocese in ordaining all deacons but will leave the ordination of priests to his assistant bishops. He emphasized that he works happily with "able and gifted women priests" in his own team, and will use the talents of the 70 women priests in the diocese.



news features

95-1274

National AIDS conference forges new partnership of government and churches

by Mike Barwell

ST. LOUIS (ENS) -- "I don't smoke. I rarely drink. I don't do drugs," said Debbie Runions, a 45-year-old journalist and teacher from Nashville, Tennessee. "I'm not a person with hemophilia. I've never had a blood transfusion. I'm heterosexual. I don't consider myself promiscuous. I had one sexual contact in 1992. Three weeks later I was in the hospital.

"I was not one of those people AIDS was supposed to touch. AIDS didn't belong to me," Runions said. "I want you to see a face and hear a voice, and know that it belongs to you. If you don't know it yet, you will."

With that warning, but with a message of healing, Runions captivated the 350 participants at the "Hope and Healing" conference on AIDS in St. Louis in late September. She helped set the tone for a brutally honest but hope-filled weekend.

The ecumenical and interfaith gathering broke new ground in AIDS education and prevention programs by forming a partnership with the United States government to fight HIV/AIDS. Co-sponsored by the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition (NEAC), and the United Methodist and Lutheran AIDS networks, the conference marked the first such collaboration between religious groups and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta on the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Runions, who serves on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, was one of several guest speakers to challenge the religious communities to join the fight against HIV/AIDS and talk about prevention in the churches.

"It's time for change"

"We decided to form a partnership with organizations where we all share in change," said Dorothy Tripplett, the CDC's associate director for minority health and prevention policy. "The faith organizations are the pulse of our communities. Church is where you go to get peace of mind, to find power to go on, a purpose in life, and love to forsake everything else." She challenged the participants: "Can you in your church set the stage for your

congregation to practice prevention which encompasses peace, power and purpose?"

"Practicing prevention is preaching love," Tripplett asserted. "That means that you're going to have to say the s-word--sex--in your church. And you're going to have to say HIV/AIDS, and STDs and TB, and racism, and poverty, unemployment, sexism, and all the other words that cannot and will not stand on truth.

"It is time for change," Tripplett announced. "That means that what was secure may not be secure. It is time for those of us in government to realize that we can't do it all. It's time for us to grab the hands of those of you who are most influential with millions of people."

"Preach the Good News!"

The Rev. Altagracia Perez of the Diocese of Los Angeles, who also serves on the presidential council, reinforced Tripplett's call for partnership.

"I don't have to tell you our nation needs healing," Perez said. "The people need healing, and they need to see a reason to hope. And that ministry is ours. Our very gathering is part of the healing process.

"Why does the church need to be in partnership with government?" Perez asked. "Because they need us. They can't do their job without us. We--the Christians who are doing the work of healing and reconciliation--have the eyes and ears necessary to see and hear the whole person, not statistics, because we live and know and feel what works best.

"We know the interconnectedness of all these things, and that is why the government needs us," Perez explained. "We have to accept the fact that we need the government" to fight HIV/AIDS.

But, Perez shouted to resounding applause, most of all the churches need to "preach the Good News. We're the ones who believe in the Paschal mystery that says through death there is life. Let's preach it in every way we know how. Let's tell people that the hurt won't kill them, and if it does kill them it's only this life and not eternal life. Let's not be afraid to evangelize the way Jesus did--which was to make the connection between everyday life and the life of God."

"I'm not ready to die. I don't know God"

Chad Boutte of New Mexico graphically illustrated that the Christian message of hope is often unheard by those who need it most. He contracted HIV/AIDS as a teenager in Louisiana through drug abuse and unprotected sex. His message was stark, angry and vivid.

"Because of HIV, I have lost my dreams, my hope, and my family," Boutte said to the silent audience. Running away from the terror of the illness and pain of his family's rejection, he set out to drive across the country "to see everything I could before I died," he said. While in New Mexico, he became ill with the first of the predatory diseases associated with HIV/AIDS. Seeking solace, he said, "I walked through every single church in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and was told to leave.

"My fear is that I do not know God. I don't know God, but I want to," he whispered.

"I am here today because I am angry--not because my life will end prematurely, but because this disease is not ceasing, instead it is killing," Boutte lamented. "We must stand on the front lines of this war and unite. I am a firm believer that education is our only weapon

against this disease."

With panels from the national Names Project AIDS Quilt as a backdrop, Boutte said, "I am only 22 years old, and I never thought I'd be standing up here saying 'I want to help my generation.' I don't want to lose one more friend."

Overcome with emotion, Boutte told the conference, "I never thought the church would care. Never in my wildest dreams did I think the church would care. I encourage you to go back to your hometowns and share, educate."

Acknowledging that "you have a lot of work to do before you hear the announcement that it is over, we have a cure," Boutte stressed that there were immediate needs that churches could meet. "I ask that you help me this weekend, help me know God. Help me feel that it is OK to die. Because I'm not ready for it. I don't know God."

"We found common ground"

The conference included workshops designed to help attendees return home challenged and armed with information on HIV/AIDS prevention, and with a new sense of hope.

The CDC's statistics were grim: AIDS is the number one killer in America for persons ages 25-44; more than one million Americans now have the AIDS virus; 18.5 million are HIV-infected worldwide.

Workshops offered by the religious community and the CDC included: *Taking the church where the virus is*; *Community prevention--how to get folk organized*; *Becoming part of the larger prevention community*; *Creating AIDS ministry at the congregational level*; and *Responding where we live with what we have*.

"It's finally happened!" said the Rev. Ted Karpf, director of NEAC and planner of the conference. "We found our common ground in unity. The religious community reached out to the CDC and the CDC reached back."

Participants—including Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, Lutherans, Jews, and Seventh Day Adventists—also took time out to engage in Bible study, worship, sharing experiences, and singing. They conducted a candlelight service the first night to remember those who have died of AIDS, and to pray for one another and those who care for HIV/AIDS patients.

The weekend culminated in a service of healing in Christ Church Cathedral, host of the conference with the Diocese of Missouri and Bishop Hays Rockwell.

Challenges remain

Despite the bleak future for herself and other persons living with AIDS, Runions summed up her hope and challenge by saying, "It is paradoxical that the virus that is killing me is healing me and making me whole. What I have learned, I have learned because of AIDS. It is something to accept and transform. AIDS has brought us to a place of healing.

"The real meaning of religion is to rejoin or re-member," Runions said. "Instead of tearing ourselves apart, AIDS is here to show us how to once again pull ourselves back together.

"This disease is not going to leave me alone, and it will not leave me a long life. I do not believe there will be a cure for me before I die," she said. "We have to find some sort of meaning in this disease. We must give up our judgment, our bigoted nature, our unkind words. We must come to a place of love. When enough people raise us up in love and

prayer, unconditionally, then we will have a healing and a cure."

--Mike Barwell is communications director for the Diocese of Southern Ohio.

95-1275

Episcopal Church continues leadership in HIV/AIDS ministries

by Michael Barwell

(ENS) The Episcopal Church continues to exhibit strong leadership in HIV/AIDS ministries, despite significant obstacles, budget cuts, and decentralization of the AIDS ministries program.

Addressing the issues and policies facing the Episcopal Church during the "Hope and Healing" conference in St. Louis, Diane Porter, executive for program at the Episcopal Church Center in New York, announced that a breakthrough meeting had enlisted the support of several organizations in the church.

The new support--from groups as diverse as Daughters of the King, Episcopal Church Women, United Thank Offering, Union of Black Episcopalians, United Episcopal Charities, and the Hospital Chaplains Association--came prior to the St. Louis conference in a special meeting called by Porter. The meeting with 21 individuals representing a dozen groups was in response to the 1994 General Convention resolution A007a calling for the church to engage in consultation and evaluation about HIV/AIDS ministries during the current triennium.

"The urgency continues," Porter said. "We have been at the AIDS business at the Church Center for 10 years, but we don't sit on our laurels. AIDS cannot be the issue du-jour. While we have done some things, we have not done enough, and we have not done enough well.

"Some of these groups had never been invited to talk about this issue before. And they want to help," Porter said, noting that several groups must confirm their intentions through board actions. "The diversity of the church was represented in new ways. We are learning that we can tap into existing church organizations and their resources and energies to help fight this disease."

General Convention asked the church to focus its AIDS ministries on education, care-giving, and advocacy. "Education is our most important business," Porter said, pointing out that the Washington, D.C. office is focusing on national HIV/AIDS policies.

This year, Executive Council created the Committee on AIDS to advise the church, said Barbara Cambridge of Dallas, Texas, "to keep the church focused on the issues related to HIV/AIDS, to keep the church updated on the epidemic, on the trends, on the statistics,

on what's going on out there in America and the world." The committee replaces the former Joint Commission on AIDS/HIV.

The other change in 1994 was elimination of the AIDS desk at the Episcopal Church Center, and formation of a partnership with the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition (NEAC) to serve as staff in order to continue and expand AIDS ministries, said attorney Jesse Milan, Jr., president of NEAC, and the new commissioner for AIDS in Philadelphia.

While reviewing the various programs and ministries authorized by General Convention, Milan said that during the coming year NEAC plans to catalogue all of the HIV/AIDS programs at every level of the church, in part to show the breadth and depth of ministries.

"We are the arms, feet, eyes and ears of the church" in AIDS ministries, Crawford added.

"AIDS has taught us the role of each member as a minister to go out and love God," Milan agreed. "We are all AIDS ministers in the church. As people go home to their places, there will be changes."

--Michael Barwell is director of communications for the Diocese of Southern Ohio.

95-1276

Archbishop Carey visits Sudan and Egypt

by James M. Rosenthal

(ACNS) Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey used a trip to Egypt and Sudan in early October to strongly challenge Sudan's Muslim government leaders to end persecution of Christians, while he delivered a message of encouragement to those he called "the forgotten people of Sudan."

At times the enthusiastic welcome Carey received from Sudan's people gave his trip the air of a papal visitation as thousands of people greeted him at his various stops. The grueling three-day event focused on the country's northern section, fulfilling Carey's desire to meet the Christian community in the capital of Khartoum, as well as in Juba, the historic heart of the Episcopal Church in Sudan and the seat of the archbishop.

Carey had restricted an earlier trip in late 1993 to the largely Christian south after the Islamic government in the north attempted to impose last-minute restrictions and demanded that the trip be government-sponsored rather than pastoral.

In Egypt, Carey delivered a lecture on interfaith relations at Al-azhar University in Cairo, a prestigious international center for Islamic studies, and met with both government and religious leaders.

Carey stresses unity in Sudan

Carey made repeated calls during his public appearances in Sudan for conciliatory dialogue between Muslims and Christians so they could "stand together, strengthen one another and build up the common good." He praised Sudanese Christians for their vibrancy of faith amidst so many hardships, and called on the Sudanese to be "a prophetic church as you speak out for the poor and vulnerable and as you seek to resist attempts to subdue your faith."

In the blazing sun in Khartoum, Carey told 15,000 worshippers, including leaders of 14 denominations, that unity was at the heart of the future of Sudan. He said, "We are one people made in the image and likeness of God. The divisions we experience are man-made divisions. They are not the will of God, for all people are precious in his sight."

Carey went on to speak of some of the fears of Christians in a land where many feel there is lack of tolerance towards Christianity. Christians "are not treated as equals," he said. "They often feel persecuted by the laws of this land. The list of grievances which Christians feel is long and heavy. Religious tolerance which should be at the heart of any civilized nation is not being granted them."

Carey's sermon was interrupted nearly 20 times by applause as people identified with what was being preached. The verbal translation met with disapproval at several points when the interpreter toned down some of Carey's remarks. Shouts of the correct Arabic echoed through the stadium.

Sudan's Archbishop Benjamin Yugusuk spoke warmly of Carey's sermon and said, "You know it wasn't you speaking, it was someone else, it was the Holy Spirit."

Government denies abuses

As Carey met government officials he emphasized that the process of Islamicization in Sudan was unacceptable. He said that he was deeply concerned about the persecution and abuses of human rights that were being reported to him. All government ministers denied that these attacks were taking place, and accused organizations like Amnesty International and the United Nations of seeking to subvert the government. But Carey made it clear that he was not convinced by the answers. He told officials that they "were not facing reality if they felt Christianity could just be pushed aside."

In a closing press conference in Khartoum, Carey again emphasized the need for trust and dialogue. "The government was keen to insist that its record of human rights is second to none and directly challenged me and other Westerners to actually give proof of abuses of human rights," Carey said. "Members of the government also insisted that there was no intention to make Christians second-class citizens. They said it was their intention in fact to make sure that Christians could practice their faith freely."

But, Carey said, "either there is gross abuse of human rights going on or there is not. How can the world be wrong when the reports have been coming from so many different directions? I have been able to raise these questions as a friend of Sudan."

He pledged to continue to raise questions after his return to England. "We all long for peace in Sudan," he said. "Sudan is an exhausted, spent country which is crying out for peace and reconciliation. It has marvelous people who could rebuild the nation to make it prosperous once again. So, although I go home, I will be leaving part of myself behind in

terms of my affection for the country and the people."

Juba event draws 90,000

In Juba, a government-controlled region in the south which one pastor called "the heart of Christian Sudan," 90,000 people gathered for worship after lining the streets to wave palm branches as his motorcade drove by.

At the service, Carey encouraged those present to be of good courage, and assured them that he knew of their suffering and the displacement of thousands of people. Speaking of his previous visit to the south, Carey said that he had heard "terrible stories about the persecution of certain groups of people in different parts of your country, the Nuba Mountains and elsewhere, of torture, rape, destruction of property, enslavement and death. I ask those who are able to take this message to them. You are not forgotten. In your suffering may you know the crucified Christ's presence."

Carey added, "We in the Anglican Communion are deeply grateful for your witness, your faith, your rejoicing the Lord. If our first impressions of Sudan may be of tragedy, our last impressions are of the triumph of Christ crucified and raised from the dead."

Visits to camps for the displaced

While Carey was able to observe firsthand the degrading conditions in which thousands of displaced people are living when he visited two refugee camps, he complained about apparent manipulation of the itinerary to downplay the suffering. A scheduled visit to one of the largest displaced persons' camps simply disappeared from the schedule on the excuse that there was too little time. On a visit to the Mayo Camp, the archbishop's motorcade was directed past an Episcopal church site to an Islamic dispensary instead. Carey noted he was "deeply sorry to hear that he had disappointed those waiting for him" at the church. At the dispensary, medicine was displayed as freely available even though the party was told repeatedly that only the rich can obtain them.

Carey said he was encouraged by a number of Christian and Muslim aid projects he saw, but in at least one incident was confronted by the threatening atmosphere that seems to prevail in the camps. An activist who spoke passionately in front of Carey was immediately arrested, and large numbers of police and security men, some plainclothes and in their teens, suddenly appeared to control the crowd.

Eileen Carey, the archbishop's wife, made a separate visit to a women's project in Khartoum sponsored by the Sudan Council of Churches where women were being taught sewing and household skills. Mrs. Carey heard the sobering cries of women who spoke of their dilemma as women in a war culture, and promised that she would help, especially with gathering books for a library on the complex. Also in Khartoum Mrs. Carey met with several hundred Mothers' Union members and other women churchworkers in All Saints' Episcopal Cathedral.

Interfaith relations focus of Egypt visit

In his visit to Egypt before the Sudan trip, Carey was invited to deliver a lecture on interfaith relationships at the Al-Azhar University in Cairo, a training school of Muslim Imams or spiritual leaders from throughout the world. The university is linked to Al-Azhar

Mosque, the leading center of Islamic studies in the Muslim world, and is also probably the oldest university in existence.

"The same religions which have such potential for creating community have, sadly, all too often divided and alienated people from one another," Carey said. "This darker side of religion all too often shows itself in places around the world where the gentle tones of mature faith are silenced by the shouts of intolerance and ignorance."

Carey stressed the need to promote "friendship, not hostility; understanding, not ignorance; reciprocity, not exclusivism; co-operation, not confrontation."

Carey also preached at Episcopal services in Cairo and Alexandria, and visited social projects of the Episcopal Church in and near Cairo and Menouf. He visited both national and local government leaders, the Sheikh of al Azajr and the Grand Mufti of Cairo as well as other Muslim leaders. He also visited with leaders of the Coptic churches.

--James M. Rosenthal is director for communication for the Anglican Communion and editor of Anglican World magazine. The Rev. Canon Andrew Deuchar contributed to this report.

95-1277

Presiding bishop's Remarks to the House of Bishops Interim Meeting Saturday, September 23, 1995 in Portland, Oregon

I welcomed the sharing at my table and I hope each of you has had a similar reaction. I want to continue in that now, by doing a little further sharing with the whole House, but rather than speaking out of my person, as we have been doing, to the degree that I can make the distinction, I want to speak now out of my role--as your Presiding Bishop.

The view is a little different from where I sit. What I see is sometimes very rich and wonderful, sometimes agonizing and painful. I have to say that, as I look out at you all this morning, I see a certain amount of anxiety, maybe some concern about what happens next. We have been on a journey together, and maybe you are hoping that we have the maps we need for the trip ahead. Maybe you aren't even sure about why you signed up to take this trip. **That** can certainly produce anxiety.

First of all, I know that the issue of the presentment is certainly producing anxiety. Let me say that issue has moved to another arena. The House has voted to proceed, and the action is now in the Court. Any thoughts or plans about what could or should happen are the responsibility of the Court to deal with, not this House.

I know there is some, perhaps not so much anxiety as interest in the Cooke matter. Please know I will report on this later in the week. I also want to spend a little time describing some of the changes in our way of operating, some central, and joyful, is the

coming of Charlie McNutt as the Chief Operating Officer. Following these remarks, Sam Hulsey and David Bowman will walk you through the proposed agenda and you will see that we will address a great many of our common concerns, and we have some built in flexibility.

The image of *journey* is deeply ingrained in our souls. It is a profoundly biblical image - a central image of Holy Scripture. Why? Because God's people have always been on a journey, and the journey continues still.

This House of Bishops is on a journey, a collective journey, just as real as the boat trip we will take tomorrow. We are inheritors of the stories of the journey so far, and we move on. Though the cast of characters changes--as we say hello to some and goodbye to others--our journey continues, and those we serve are coming right along with us.

The House of Bishops is an organic entity. It has a personality. It changes and evolves as any person does, and we need to keep checking in on where we are and who we are becoming. We need to attend to our institutional memory, so we grow and progress, don't keep repeating the same mistakes, and learn from our experiences.

I would date the most recent chapter our present journey to the Phoenix General Convention of 1991. How many of you were in the House of Bishops at that time? Raise your hands so we get a sense of this. We had a certain way of doing business at that time and we were accustomed to it. We understood it. There was an atmosphere of competition for authority. Each issue was debated and those on all sides of the debates had their particularly articulate and special champions. We voted things up, or down. Some won. Some lost. We had clarity.

Though there were many friendships within the House, people who had perhaps been in seminary together, been friends for a long time, but beyond that we didn't know each other very well. We had almost no opportunities for conversation beyond the social chitchat. We did not engage in moral discourse together. We did not hear from people outside the House and then reflect on the meaning of what they had said to the House, or on what they might mean for our ministry together.

We did a lot of politicking. We lobbied one another, and we as individual bishops were nibbled at from all quarters, lobbied, cajoled, persuaded. That was part and parcel of how the game was played. And it was a game we understood. Not a bad game, but a different way.

During our meeting in Phoenix I came to the realization that we should not go on in this fashion any longer. I felt that we were cheating ourselves and the church by not claiming the shared leadership, the episcopate. I did not want to go through the next six years of my time as Presiding Bishop trying to arbitrate disputes and keeping order. I did not want us to be a polite debating society who gathered for the purpose of dishing out rhetoric to one another and the grandstand as a way of prevailing and thus fighting our way to a decision.

And so, I called for a time out. I didn't know what would happen, but I knew we had to stop, and we did. We took stock. We went together to Kanuga for a meeting in March, 1992 and we began to discover our identity in a new way. Out of that experience, we adopted a statement you all have seen. We pledged to ourselves and to the church that the old way wasn't working and that we were going to try, with God's help and the leading of the Spirit, we were going to try something new.

And so we have. Since then, we have been going down a new road together. We have traded in the old ways of doing business for some new ways. We have met more frequently. We have come to know one another as individuals. Together, we have come to know the personality of the House -- that organic entity we are all a part of. We have come to shape that entity together and to help it grow. Growth is painful and this has been painful, painful and frequently frustrating. I also believe it has been enormously challenging, enormously stimulating for our individual ministries, and enormously rewarding for the life of our church.

One of the major benefits of our new way is that we are able to put things on the table that we would never have been able to deal with before. We do have some difficult issues before us. Not only are we invested in their outcome, people around the church are, and thus the pressure is on us. It is a certain kind of pressure. It is a pressure to pull apart from one another, to form the power groups, choose up sides to lobby one another, to adopt the win/lose postures again, to revert to the old ways, the ways we understood. There is pressure to say: let's go back to what used to work. There is pressure to say: let's decide. There is pressure to force decisions and answer questions that we ourselves have not framed.

My dear friends, we have to frame the questions. We have to take the responsibility for the timetable. We have to live in the tension of ambiguity. We have to model for the church what it means to be able to do all of this. It isn't easy but it is who we are, it is what this House is. It is what leadership is all about. We, the bishops, are not the only leaders in the church but we must do our part.

Now, let us name our anxiety. Let us recognize that doing a new thing, and behaving in a new way, does produce anxiety, tension, and that is not bad. In fact, it is good. It is the stuff of growth.

We also have to name the pressure we feel--both internally and from others around the church--the pressure to force clarity where no clarity is possible. You don't have to sit where I sit to know that there are pressure groups around the church who are doing all they can to create a climate of dis-ease. I don't speak of all groups who gather together around issues. That can be healthy. However, it can become sick, very sick, very vicious. There are those in this church, in our household of faith, who are willing to attack and diminish our church in order to gather strength for their positions. What does this have to do with evangelism? What does this have to do with building up the Body of Christ?

We have to name that there is a mean spirit abroad in the church. I don't think I'm telling you anything you don't know. I believe this spirit is intolerable, and that we as a House must not tolerate it. This meanness dishonors and diminishes all of us. It has nothing to do with building up the church and our mission. It drains off energy, rather than bringing energies together around a common goal. It has absolutely no place in our common life.

I think you are all aware of the attacks that have been made on me as Presiding Bishop. I want you to know that I would have to have such a large ego that it would be pathological to have this not bother me at all. I don't have that kind of an ego. And, I will confess that some of it has been very troubling. However, I do have something else. I have faith in God's leading me, guiding me. I believe that I have been called to this Office and, surely, I don't have to depend on my own strength, my own wisdom.

I also have a particular relationship to this House, that organic entity we are--that

whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. I have faith in this House to disown the meanspiritedness and model a different way. I call on you to do that. I also believe that we as a House have a wonderful opportunity to show the church a new way. I believe that our church has an opportunity to show the world a new way. I believe that in a societal climate of meanness, we can choose to model a new way, which is the way of Jesus. I will say a little more about this on Tuesday.

We have some choices to make here. We can choose to work together to find a place on which to stand so we can make our way through difficulties. We can choose to grant one another the safety to be vulnerable. We can choose to meet on the ground of our common faith and ask God's blessing on our enterprise, that our weaknesses will be met by God's strength, our brokenness by God's wholeness. Or, we can choose to forget the whole thing.

Yes, there is anxiety. Let us be helped through that by our knowledge of God's loving presence. Yes, there is a need for closure. Let us be helped through that by knowing that growth requires openness. Yes, there is a need for being together, and for discussing hard things, things we would rather bury. We won't finish our discussions during these next days but we can be helped by knowing that we have some very solid time together and we can make a good start and give ourselves something to reflect on. Yes, there is tension between our need to work on some of the issues before us, and the need to make a vigorous witness in the world. Let us be helped through that by knowing that one aspect of our common life nurtures the other, and all that we are doing is leading toward both our wholeness and the consequent strengthening of our mission.

One final sharing. These last months, I would say since the first part of this year, have been among the most difficult in my life. They have also, in a very strange and mysterious way, been among the best. I don't think I have ever known so deeply what it means to live in the presence of God. I said that growth was painful. I think it is also true that pain can bring growth and this has been a time of enormous growth for me. I wouldn't have prayed for this, but I can now honestly thank God for the blessing of it.

Well, that's the news from Lake Wobegon. I thank this House for the support you have given me. I look forward to this week and our work together. Let us keep always in mind that we are here to be about the business of the One who knows us, and loves us, and leads us.

Rt. Rev. Edmond Browning
Presiding bishop and primate

95-1278

A statement from the House of Bishops, September 28, 1995, Portland, Oregon

We are bishops of the Episcopal Church gathered in Portland, Oregon, for an interim meeting between General Conventions.

We affirm the need for the church to welcome legitimate criticism and differences of opinion. These are vital for the shaping of our future.

In our presiding bishop's opening statement to us, Edmond Browning identified a mean spiritedness within our church which is destructive to our life and mission. We agree with him in this assessment and join him in desiring to name and confront this evil wherever it is experienced. We name as "mean spiritedness" fragmentary and distorted information used to demean persons and create environments of fear, hostility and distrust.

Our plea to one another, to the church and to our society, is that we employ the respect and consideration which characterized Jesus' relationships with others. We must also remember that the Anglican tradition is one of breadth and spaciousness which honors diversity, and is able to contain a wide variety of theological perspectives. In our present day the gift of Anglican comprehensiveness is all the more precious. It is a gift from God, a gift we are called upon to celebrate and share. Such comprehensiveness is rooted in prayer for one another, in mutual respect which seeks to hear the truth in the other, and in an ability to listen to as many voices as possible in shaping the moment when God calls us to form judgements and make decisions.

As chief pastors, we do not expect nor do we seek a moratorium on dealing with difficult or complex issues. At the same time, we invite all to join us in supporting and affirming the mission and ministry of the Episcopal Church, which is none other than the mission and ministry of the risen Christ in which we all share through baptism. May we in hope be faithful to this call and "May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit." (*Romans 15:13*)

95-1279

The following statement was circulated September 28 at the Episcopal Church's House of Bishops meeting in Portland, Oregon.

A statement of concern

The House of Bishops, by its vote yesterday, has abandoned patient dialogue and adopted authoritarian command as the way to "solve" the ongoing tension between those who support and those who, for theological reasons, cannot honestly accept the ordination of women. This action is a denial of the basic Anglican principle that the Church cannot demand that which cannot be proven from the plain teaching of Scripture. A Catholic theological position universally held for almost 2,000 years, and still embraced by a majority of the Anglican Communion, will have been banished from the life and practice of this church.

The devastation of this repressive legislation on tens of thousands of Episcopalians cannot begin to be measured. Hundreds and hundreds of priests, deacons, and religious will likewise be affected. Turmoil in parishes across the land is assured by this action. The issue

touches far more than the lives of people in four dioceses, and more members of this House than four bishops.

As the bishop of New Jersey said, we "have 27 months" before coercion begins. Clearly, this threat and this action create a new level of impaired communion, subverting the collegiality of the House, and guaranteeing, for the first time in history, that the Episcopal Church will actively prohibit Catholic order.

We re-affirm our own total commitment to the Catholic order and faith, even in the face of a coming persecution. We will not abandon the faithful, no matter the cost. Because we love the church, we cannot remain silent when the self-destruction of the church has begun. What has happened to us today has set a precedent for others tomorrow.

Rt. Rev. William Wantland

Rt. Rev. Donald Parsons

Rt. Rev. Jack Iker

Rt. Rev. Keith Ackerman

Rt. Rev. John-David Schofield

Rt. Rev. William C. R. Sheridan

95-1280

A statement made by certain bishops in the face of the impending trial of Bishop Righter

We the undersigned recognize the witness of the Rt. Rev. Walter C. Righter to the Christ who lived, died and rose for the salvation of all. Walter Righter's trial is a trial of the Gospel, a trial of justice, a trial of fairness, and a trial of the church. We stand with Bishop Righter. We feel charged as Bishop Righter is charged. We feel on trial as Bishop Righter is on trial. Should he be found guilty, we are guilty. Should Bishop righter be sentenced, we will accept his sentence as our own.

Allen L. Bartlett, Jr., Pennsylvania

George S. Bates, Utah

William Burrill, Rochester

Steve Charleston, Alaska

Jane Holmes Dixon, Suffragan of Washington

Ronald H. Haines, Washington

Sanford Z.K. Hampton, Suffragan of Minnesota

Barbara C. Harris, Suffragan of Massachusetts

George N. Hunt, Acting Bishop of Hawaii

James L. Jelinek, Minnesota

Jack M. McKelvey, Suffragan of Newark

M. Thomas Shaw, Massachusetts
Richard L. Shimpfky, El Camino Real
John S. Spong, Newark
Orris G. Walker, Long Island
R. Stewart Wood, Jr., Michigan
Tom Ray, Northern Michigan
Roger Blanchard, Retired of Southern Ohio
John M. Burgess, Retired of Massachusetts
John Harris Burt, Retired of Ohio
George C. Cadigan, Retired of Missouri
Otis Charles, Retired of Utah
David R. Cochran, Retired of Alaska
Robert DeWitt, Retired of Pennsylvania
A. Theodore Eastman, Retired of Maryland
John E. Hines, Retired Presiding Bishop
John Krumm, Retired Southern Ohio
H. Coleman McGehee, Jr., Retired of Michigan
William Marmion, Retired of Southwestern Virginia
Paul Moore, Jr., Retired of New York
Quintin E. Primo, Retired, Suffragan of Chicago
George E. Rath, Retired of Newark
Francisco Reus-Froylen, Retired of Puerto Rico
Robert R. Spears, Jr., Retired of Rochester
Richard M. Trelease, Retired of Rio Grande
Frederick B. Wolf, Retired of Maine



reviews and resources

95-1281

National Aids Memorial marks 10th anniversary

(ENS) The National Aids Memorial at the Church of St. John the Divine marks its 10th anniversary since its dedication on November 9, 1985. The memorial's mission statement, "To honor the dead and serve the living," is realized through the inclusion of names of those submitted in the Book of Remembrance, which is located in the memorial in the south nave of the cathedral, and through funding AIDS initiatives nationwide. The memorial is open to anyone and no contribution is required to have a name inscribed. Anyone wishing to provide the name of a deceased individual for the Book of Remembrance, contribute to the fund, or apply for a grant should write: National Aids Memorial, Cathedral of St. John the Divine, P.O. Box 1036, New York, NY 10011.

Planned giving brochures available

(ENS) The Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF) announced that in November it will begin distributing a series of new brochures that explain the advantages of the various planned giving arrangements available to Episcopalians. According to the designers, "each of the 'tract rack' flyers begins with scripture and explains in brief, non-technical language the advantages and opportunities of a particular method of giving. . . . A second set of six 'technical support' brochures serve as the more detailed follow-up leaflets that explain how to make particular kinds of gifts." Subjects include wills, the pooled income fund, charitable trusts, gifts of life insurance, and the life estate. The printed materials were developed as part of the foundation's nationwide ministry of planned giving and are the first new flyers produced by the church on the subject in more than 10 years. Sample copies of the brochures can be obtained by calling ECF at (800) 877-0012.

Peace Papers resource offers alternatives to violence

(ENS) The Parenting for Peace and Justice Network (PPJN) in conjunction with the Episcopal Church's office of children's ministries has announced the availability of the Peace Papers, a children's bulletin offering young people a way to prevent violence and choose alternatives to violence. The bulletin is geared towards children between the ages of 6 and 10 and contains activities, games, stories, and puzzles aimed at violence prevention and peacemaking. According to Jim Vogt, administrator for PPJN, "There are several ways your congregation could use [this resource]: distribute it as a children's bulletin with the regular adult bulletins; use it as a supplement to the religious education or children's church programs; or offer it as a take-home resource for families in the congregation." A yearly subscription to the Peace Papers is \$68 and a three month subscription is \$13. For more

information about these and other PPJN resources, write to The Parenting for Peace and Justice Network, 4144 Lindell, #124, St. Louis, MO 63108, or call (314) 533-4445.

Photos available in this issue of ENS are:

1. Bishops visit schools during meeting in Portland (95-1265)
2. Members of the church's interim bodies meet in Minneapolis (95-1266)
3. Righter to face heresy trial (95-1267)
4. Alaska celebrates centennial, bids farewell to its bishop (95-1268)
5. Geralyn Wolf elected bishop of Rhode Island (95-1269)
6. AIDS conference hears strong testimonies (95-1274)
7. Canterbury visits Egypt and the Sudan

The tentative mailing dates for the next ENS releases are November 9 and November 30.